

CLAIMS

1. A terminal device connected, in a communication-enabled manner, with a center device, so that an image and/or a sound data is received from the center device, the center device being connected with at least one external device, the terminal device comprising:

communication means for communicating with the center device; and

control means for controlling an operation of the terminal device,

the control means including:

identification information acquiring means for acquiring, from the center device via the communication means, identification information for identifying the external device;

remote-operation data producing means for generating remote-operation data when a remote operation is performed with respect to the external device, the remote-operation data containing (a) remote operation information indicating content of the remote operation, and (b) identification information of the external device to be subjected to the remote operation; and

remote-operation data transmitting means for transmitting, to the center device via the communication means, the remote-operation data having been generated

by the remote-operation data producing means.

2. The terminal device as set forth in claim 1, further comprising:

remote-controller signal receiving means for receiving a remote-controller signal from a remote-controlling device for use in remotely operating the terminal device, wherein

the remote-operation data producing means of the control means generates the remote-operation data, based on the remote-controller signal received by the remote-controller signal receiving means.

3. The terminal device as set forth in claim 2, wherein:

the remote-operation data producing means generates remote-controller information, based on the remote-controller signal, and adds the identification information to the remote-controller information, so as to generate the remote-operation data.

4. A center device, to which at least one external device is connected, for transmitting image and/or sound data to a terminal device, the center device comprising:

communication means for communicating with the

terminal device;

storage means for storing therein identification information for identifying the external device; and

control means for controlling an operation of the center device,

the control means including:

identification information transmitting means for transmitting, to the terminal device via the communication means, the identification information stored in the storage means;

remote-operation data acquiring means for acquiring, from the terminal device via the communication means, remote-operation data for remotely operating the external device, the remote-operation data containing (a) remote-controller information indicating content of the remote operation, and (b) identification information of the external device to be subjected to the remote operation; and

remote control means for remotely operating, in accordance with the remote-controller information in the remote-operation data, the external device corresponding to the identification information in the remote-operation data acquired by the remote-operation data acquiring means.

5. The center device as set forth in claim 4, wherein:
the storage means further stores therein device-use-information indicating a use-status of the external device; and
the remote control means judges, based on the device-use-information, whether or not the remote operation is performed.
6. The center device as set forth in claim 4, further comprising:
infrared transmitting means for transmitting a signal, in a form of infrared light, to the external device, the signal being used for the remote control means to remotely operate the external device.
7. A communication system wherein the terminal device set forth in any one of claims 1 through 3 is connected, in a communication-enabled manner, with the center device set forth in any one of claims 4 through 6.
8. The communication system as set forth in claim 7, wherein the terminal device and the center device perform a wireless communication.
9. A method for controlling a terminal device which is

connected, in a communication-enabled manner, with a center device so that an image and/or a sound data is received from the center device the center device to which at least one external device is connected, wherein:

the terminal device includes communication means for communicating with the center device; and

the method includes the steps of:

acquiring, from the center device via the communication means, identification information for identifying the external device;

generating remote-operation data when a remote operation is performed with respect to the external device, the remote-operation data containing (a) remote operation information indicating content of the remote operation, and (b) identification information of the external device to be subjected to the remote operation; and

transmitting the remote-operation data, which has been generated, to the center device via the communication means.

10. A method for controlling a center device to which at least one external device is connected, the center device being for transmitting image and/or sound data to a terminal device, wherein:

the center device includes (a) communication means

for communicating with the terminal device, and (b) storage means for storing therein identification information for identifying the external device; and

the method includes the steps of:

transmitting, to the terminal device via the communication means, the identification information stored in the storage means;

acquiring, from the terminal device via the communication means, remote-operation data for remotely operating the external device, the remote-operation data containing (a) remote-controller information indicating content of the remote operation, and (b) identification information of the external device to be subjected to the remote operation; and

remotely operating, in accordance with the remote-controller information in the remote-operation data, the external device corresponding to the identification information in the remote-operation data that has been acquired.

11. A terminal device controlling program for operating the terminal device set forth in any one of claims 1 through 3, the terminal device controlling program causing a computer to function as the control means.

12. A center device controlling program for operating the center device set forth in claim 4 or 5, the center device controlling program causing a computer to function as the control means.

13. A computer-readable recording medium storing the terminal device controlling program set forth in claim 11 and/or the center device controlling program set forth in claim 12.